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Essays, Expositions, &c.

JESUS THE WAY.

BY REV. J. W. COLE.

"I am the way."—John xiv. 6.

God has chosen, in many parts of Scripture to convey to our minds a knowledge of heavenly truths, by, or through earthly illustrations. The person, character, nature, and offices of the Saviour are rendered more intelligible to us, by the free use, in the word of God, of metaphors or figures. Hence, in the Bible, Jesus is brought before our notice under varied appellations; and in the text at the head of this paper he is spoken of as "THE WAY."

It is important that we bear in mind that Jesus does not say "I *know* the way," or "I *show* the way," but "I *am* the way." None before or since, among the sons of men, have used language so startling as this. Not Abraham, "the father of the faithful," and "the friend of God"—not David the "Lord's anointed," and the man after his own heart,"—not Isaiah the evangelical prophet; the symphony of whose "songs in the night" even now salutes our listening ears, like the sound of distant music;—not Moses "who while he spoke like a prophet, ruled like a king,"—not John the Baptist, the greatest of prophets, who stood between two dispensations, and was permitted to behold the glory of the kingdom he foretold. We, therefore conclude, that in person and office "Jesus of Nazareth" excelled all these. Indeed these words, like many others that He uttered, bear testimony, not only to the divinity of his mission, but of his *person* also. It is further worthy of observation that Jesus did not say "I am *a* way," but "I am *the* way," thus proclaiming that, while he is the medium through which men approach the eternal Father, he is, moreover, the *only* medium of their approach. Men may try to find other ways, may even think that they have succeeded in finding such, but eventually they will be doomed to disappointment; "for," beside the name of Jesus, "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). Every way leads somewhere, and Jesus, as "the way," leads to heaven, to happiness, to life eternal. He came from God, he leads to God. He is the bridge, the *only* bridge, that spans the great gulf which sin, like a mighty earthquake, has made between the terrestial and celestial spheres. He is the spiritual ladder, which Jacob saw, which, had its foot "set upon the earth," but

"the top of it reached to heaven." He is "*the* way," and beside him there is *no* other. It follows then, that many things which men regard as ways to God, are not so. They lead from Him rather than to him. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is the ways of death" (Pro. xvi. 25). And here we may observe that Ritualism (the daily or weekly performance of religious ceremonies) is not the way to heaven—that mortification of the flesh is not the way; that mere morality is not the way; and that outward profession is not the way. "The way" is Jesus, and "*Jesus only*."

This "way" is an *old* way. We cannot tell how old. Imagination can hardly carry us back to the time when it was not. Jesus is spoken of in the word of God as "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8). His saints are said to be "chosen in him from *before* the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 4). Hence the way of escape from sin is older than sin itself.

Again, Jesus as "the way" is a *tried* way. All those who have reached the skies, have travelled thither upon it; we need not fear then to venture upon it too. This way was cast up by Jehovah himself for sin-sick souls to travel upon, from the gloom of earth to the glory of the skies. The way is open to every one who desires to avail himself of it. It has been safely traversed by the redeemed in all ages. It is a beaten path, a well tried way.

"The King's high way it is for all,
Who mourn th'effects of Adam's fall;
No man need fear to venture here,
It's travellers are Jehovah's care.

But we must not forget, that Jesus, as "the way" is a *difficult* way. Our confidence in it does not abound because there is no difficulty or danger to be encountered thereon. Every man who ventures upon Christ must be prepared for trial and conflict. Trials and difficulty and persecutions beset the path of Immanuel himself. He was opposed by self-righteous Pharisees, by carping Sadducees, by false professors, by ignorant hearers, who, because his doctrine was above their carnal comprehensions, went back and walked no more with him. "The servant is not greater than his Lord," and Jesus says plainly to those who follow him, "If they have persecuted me they will also persecute you." He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and to those who tread in his footsteps it is said, "Through much tribulation shall ye enter the kingdom." Therefore "my brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James i. 2, 3, 4). This "way" is an *unfrequented* way.

"Broad is the road that leads to hell,
And thousands walk together there;
But wisdom shows a narrow path,
With here and there a traveller."

The Son of man, when speaking of this way, uttered these solemn words, "Few there be that find it." What numbers are there upon the broad road, outside the visible church; and alas! what numbers *inside*. As in the former days so now, many have a name that they live, and are dead (Rev. iii. 1). Surely then, it becomes all who think that they are upon this way to utter the petition of the Psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24).

Again Jesus, as "the way," is a *narrow* way. Himself has so described it. "Straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life" (Matt. vii. 14). Broad enough, my fellow sinner, for thy naked soul; but too narrow for a man and his sins, too narrow for a man and his love of the world, too narrow for a man and his self-righteousness.

This way is also a *safe* way. None were ever lost upon it. "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." "No lion shall be there, nor

any ravenous beast shall go up thereon." But the Lord's people shall walk *safely* there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and *everlasting* joy upon their heads" (Isaiah xxxv). It must be so, for He who is both "the way" and the Lord of the way, so wills it. To His disciples he uttered these memorable words, "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing" (John vi. 39). And again, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory" (John xvii. 24). Every true believer may sing the words of Paul Gerhardt.

"Is God for me? I fear not, though all against me rise;
When I call on Christ my Saviour, the host of evil flys,
My Friend, the Lord Almighty, and he who loves me, God!
What enemy shall harm me though coming as a flood?
I know it, I believe it, I say it fearlessly,
That God the highest, mightiest, for ever loveth me.
At all times, in all places, He standeth at my side;
He rules the battle fury, the temptest, and the tide.
* * * * * * * * *
There is no condemnation, there is no hell for me;
The torment and the fire my eyes shall never see;
For me there is no sentence, for me death has no sting,
Because the Lord, who loves me, shall shield me with His wing."

Surely, then, we may say, this "way," is a *peaceful* way. Jesus Christ is the true wisdom; and we know, upon the authority of God's word, that wisdom's ways "are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

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THE RIVER JORDAN.

"How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"—Jeremiah xii. 5.

THE time when the prophet Jeremiah lived stands out with striking prominence in Jewish history. It was at the time of the Babylonish captivity. He was an eye-witness of the fearful degeneracy and immorality into which the Jews had fallen. God and his worship had been forsaken; idolatry had been patronised; and unholy alliances had been formed with the heathen. The prophet exclaimed, "Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" Nebuchadnezzar and his army were permitted to besiege Jerusalem, and to carry away captive to Babylon more than four thousand Jews. To this fearful state of desolation and bondage they were brought; but they had frequently been warned. God had spoken to them by his prophets and by his providence; but His voice had been disregarded. Now, the prophet reasons, "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, how canst thou contend with horses; or, if in a land of peace thou hast been wearied, how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" That is, if thou art not able to contend with little things, how canst thou contend with a great one? The river Jordan became swollen, and overflowed its banks in the time of harvest, which was about the month of August. Then, fording the river was impossible, because it was swollen, and the current impetuous. Is there not a reference in the above words to the passage of the Israelites from the wilderness to Canaan? At the end of their forty years' journey in the desert, under the leadership of Joshua they came to the river Jordan which divided the promised land from them, and it was in the time of harvest when the river was swollen. Moses, the Lawgiver, would not have been sufficiently illustrative in this position, because law will not lead a soul to heaven. Joshua led the Israelites forward. Through the river was the way to the long expected and delightful land. When the feet of the priests who bore the ark touched the water, a new-made way was opened

through the swollen and impetuous river. The water was reared up on an heap like a wall for protection, and the Israelites passed through as on dry land into Canaan. So at the end of the Christian life; at the end of the journey of the desert; saints come to the river—the river of death. Through it is the way to the heavenly Canaan. Most Christians are accustomed to regard the swelling Jordan, and appropriately so, as the emblem of death. Dr. Watts said long ago,

"Death like a narrow sea divides
This heavenly land from ours."

1.—Let us regard death, then, as illustrated by the swelling Jordan. Certainly it is a figure; but it is one of the most illustrative figures which the Scriptures employ. John Bunyan in his inimitable Pilgrim's Progress, uses the same emblem to illustrate the passage from this world to the future.

In the distance, death may seem only like a small river; but drawing near to it in thought, or in presence, it may become a swollen, impetuous Jordan. When the Israelites were far away in the desert, and in the months of Winter the river Jordan might be low; but they came to it in the time of harvest, and it overflowed its banks. True it is, death is always the same, but we do not always see it the same. Far away in thought from it, it does not appear to us at all. We might be eternal citizens of earth. Called to it by the records of providence; by the mournful processions that move towards the city of the dead; and by the departure of all past generations, we are convinced it is a reality; but we are prone to think "all men mortal but ourselves." Called to stand in the chamber of the silent dead, we come nearer to it. We behold the cheeks which were once blooming turned pale, the sparkling eyes are dim if not closed, the tongue, the hands, the feet, and the body are still and cold. All the pleasure, pomp, wealth, and all the dignified relationships and associations of earth are at an end. A coffin contains all that is left. "Thou carriest them away as with a flood." Necessitated to come to it ourselves, it will be the time of harvest—the harvest of the soul. Then it may rise and swell in importance like a mighty swollen river. How solemn, how momentous, how mighty, and how irresistable is the river of death! This river is certain. Through the river Jordan was the divinely appointed passage for the Israelites to Canaan, so the Jordan of death is the passage to the heavenly Canaan. Both the king and the beggar must die. Death is no respecter of persons. They may consult the wisest physicians; they may observe the most temperate habits; and they may emigrate to the most salubrious clime; still, through the river of death they must go. All the wealth of ten thousand worlds; all the knowledge of the wisest philosophers; and all the skill embodied in the medical profession could not avoid the river of death. "It is appointed unto man once to die." "There is no discharge in that war."

Through the river of death, a man may be called to go solitary and alone. That is, without the company of any man. An individual who is entertaining serious and anxious thoughts about practical religion, may hesitate to go forward in the ways of God because of the ideas embodied in the words "if I should become a follower of Christ, I shall be the only one in the family, the only one in the house, the only one in the shop or in the field." "I should have to go solitary and alone, to sail against wind and tide, and to fight against the immorality and all the erroneous notions by which I am surrounded, single-handed and alone." All these statements may be true. The prophet describes the holy Saviour saying, "I have trod down the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me" (Isaiah lxiii.3). A careful reader of the Scriptures would not infer that either Abel, Noah, Lot, Abraham, Paul, or Peter had the people generally with him. Christ spoke to his disciples as "a little flock." We cannot think that either John Bunyan or George Fox could have been long detained in prison if the voice of the country had been in their favour. A saint may have to fight alone now—to fight against tremendous foes. Still, God is with him. When a man comes to step into the river of death, will his friends

or his neighbours, or the populace go with him there? They may attend him through life; they may surround his dying bed, and wipe the perspiration from his throbbing brow; they may even observe his last throb; but they will go no farther. He must go through the Jordan of death without them. If a saint must go solitary and alone, is it not infinitely better that he should do it than that he should go with the multitude to hell. God has said, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee" (Isaiah xliii. 2).

In the enjoyment of the divine favour, the passage through the swelling Jordan becomes comparatively easy. The Israelites were brought from Egyptian bondage—brought through the Red Sea into the Wilderness. They wandered forty years in the desert; they were guided by the pillar of a cloud by day, and by the pillar of a fire by night; they were fed with the manna, and drank from the stream which flowed from the smitten rock; they offered the sacrifices which God required; and when they came to the end of their journey, the swelling Jordan opened before them, and they went through as on dry ground to the Promised Land. Being the subjects of the great blessings which these emblems illustrate, viz:—being brought from the bondage of sin and Satan into the wilderness; having Christ the heavenly manna in the heart by faith; drinking of the streams which flow through Him; and being guided by the word and the spirit of God into all practical religion, saints will come to the end of their desert journey; but they will find that all which makes the Jordan of death most painful is removed. The sting is gone, and they will pass through with firm footing and uninjured to the heavenly land. What is it that makes death fearful and distressing? Is it not sin that aggravates and mortifies the soul, together with the consciousness that a polluted sinner must soon stand in the presence of Him who is holy and just? These are things which contribute to make the river rise and swell. But if we have been brought from bondage to liberty, we are made partakers of the divine nature which appreciates the presence of God and things divine. If Christ has been received by faith, sin is forgiven through his sacrificial death. "We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of his sins" (Col. i. 14).

"If sin be pardoned I'm secure,
Death hath no sting beside;
The law gave sin its damning power,
But Christ my ransom died."

If we are following the word and the spirit of God, all that makes death most fearful and distressing is gone. We shall go through the river with calmness; in peace, if not in ecstacy. One saint when dying said, "This is no longer a foretaste, this is heaven; I not only feel the climate, but I breathe the ambrosial air of heaven, and shall soon enjoy the company." "O death," said another, "where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

2.—The question at the head of this article ought to be personally regarded. We are not asked if we will go through the river. That matter is fixed by an unalterable law. The question is, "how wilt *thou* do in the swelling of Jordan?" This question should be regarded by the man who is ignorant of what will make him fit for, and what will give him a title to the heavenly land. Bunyan describes a man called Ignorance going up to the river, and he went over in the boat of a ferry-man called Vain Hope. He went up to the gate of the city; but when asked for his certificate, he fumbled in his bosom for one, but found none. He was then taken away. That man was truly called Ignorance. He was ignorant of himself, of his sinfulness, and ignorant of Christ? He went easily over without a firm footing, without even touching the bottom of the river; but he found at the other side a closed door. He illustrates the case of many. A man ignorant of himself and Christ, may go up to the river without agitation—boldly, and he may go easily over; he may die like a lamb borne up by a "Vain

Hope" of heaven; but at the other side he finds a closed door. Heaven is not the place for "Ignorance." How will a man do who is convinced by the light of conscience that he is a notorious transgressor? He comes to the river, and it swells high. Some part of the black page of life may be before him. His intemperance, his debauchery, his robbery, his abused advantages, the reproofs of conscience and of friends; and above all, the consciousness that he is approaching the presence, the frowning presence of God unfit for, and without a title to heaven, will make the river swell tremendously high. Did we ask how will such a man do? May we not put the question in another form? What can he do? Is it answered he can pray? God may then close his ear. He does say, "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel; they despise all my reproof; therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices" (Prov. i. 28-31).

How will a mere formalist do in the swelling of Jordan? It is possible for a man to assume a profession of religion, to secure some confidence, some honour, some applause, or some worldly good. He may go through the world without being detected by mortal man, without being excluded from the visible church; but he cannot deceive God. "Death bed is said to be the detector of the secrets of the heart." There the mask may be torn away, and the man appear in his true character. Of all sinners, the hypocrite is most dreadful. How will he do? He may tremble and quake: his state and his prospects are terrible. How will the Christian do in the swelling of Jordan? He will march on with peace, joy, and confidence. He has come from the land of bondage; he has travelled through the wilderness; he has a nature fit for, and a title to heaven. Before him, before the power of his faith, the proud waves must fall back, divide, and land him safe on Canaan's side. He will go through with a firm footing on Christ. True there is a difference in the degree of the joy and ecstacy of the dying beds, even of saints. Some have joy, but not ecstacy. Christian and Hopeful asked when they came to the river, "if the waters were all of a depth." The answer they received was, "the river was deeper or shallower as they believed in the king of the place." It shows that our way will be clear, and that our joy will abound in proportion to the strength of our faith. This subject teaches most conclusively that the Christian life is the way to a satisfactory death, and to a glorious eternity. The great question as it has been well observed by many devoted ministers of Christ is not, how does a man die? It is, how does a man live. If a man lives the life produced by the saving grace of God within him, his death is sure to be right. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18).

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wishful eye
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie.
Fill'd with delight, my raptured soul
Can here no longer stay;
Though Jordan's waves around me roll,
Fearless I'll launch away!"

Little Leigh. A. S.

To the Editor of the "Primitive Church Magazine."

DEAR SIR,—Having, together with other brethren, promised to contribute some articles to your periodical, I now begin the fulfilment of my own engagement. It may, perhaps, interest and profit your readers if I pass in review some of the incidents which I have witnessed during a pastorate extending over a period of more than thirty years. I will send you a paper with as great frequency as my leisure will permit.—I remain, yours truly,

Bury, Lancashire, April, 1869. JAMES WEBB.

PASTORAL RECOLLECTIONS. NO. I.—SUDDEN DEATH.

"Absent from the body, to be present with the Lord."—2 Cor. v. 8.

AT our usual Monday evening Prayer Meeting, held January 12th, 1863, at Stoke Green, Ipswich, among others who came was Mr. William Root, a deacon of the church worshipping there. After some other members had offered prayer, I asked him to lead our devotions. When he had presented various petitions at "the mercy-seat," in which he earnestly besought the divine blessing on the missionary enterprize, and affectionately commended the pastor with his family, and the church, to the gracious care and guidance of God, he added,—"fit us for the trials of life, the struggles of death, and"—he was, probably, about to entreat preparedness for the eternal world; but, just at this moment, he suddenly ceased, and fell backward. He had been standing at my side, and I caught him in my arms, and somewhat eased the violence of a fall which I could not prevent; for he was a stout and heavy man. We were all greatly alarmed, but cherished the hope, for a short time, that he had only been seized with a fit. Our mistake was soon mournfully corrected. A surgeon who had been sent for quickly came, and after having examined the body, pronounced our friend dead. *Conscious* life was evidently extinct when he fell, and a few minutes later all the functions of animal life were likewise extinguished. His death was caused by a disease of the heart of a peculiar kind, but which had not much impaired his general health and vigour. One of his daughters was present and witnessed the agonising scene which spread the feelings of surprise, grief, and awe throughout the assembly gathered for prayer. We deeply felt the truth of the language, "in the midst of life we are in death." Still, we were comforted concerning our brother. "He was a good man," and we cherished the delightful persuasion that he who begun the evening with the supplications of time, ended it with the songs of eternity. The vessel of his mortal life had seemed likely to pursue its course for some years longer; but the voyage was quickly ended, and "the fair havens" of eternal peace and joy gained.

The deceased had been, for many years, a valuable and esteemed deacon of the church meeting at Stoke-Green. Genial in temper, devout in spirit, and marked by eminent consistency of conduct, he was also greatly distinguished by compassion for the poor and suffering. Oft had his sympathy and help operated on their hearts like the flowing current on a parched soil. The writer delivered a discourse, relative to the solemn event, to as large a congregation as ever assembled within the walls of the chapel, from the record concerning the martyred Stephen—"and when he had said this, he fell asleep" (Acts vii. 60).

This affecting event may yield some instructive lessons. We may learn from it *How mercifully the providential dispensations of God are often adapted to the feelings of his servants.*

Sudden death does not, in itself, appear desirable. Most of us, I judge, had rather linger awhile on the shores of Jordan,—

"And view the scene on either hand."

Our friend possibly shared this sentiment; yet he frequently had a dread of death in its features of mystery, and its pangs and partings. He was spared even the sight of "the last enemy," and scarcely felt the piercing of his shaft. His departure was more like a translation than a death.

The marvellous change which the sudden death of a believer occasions. A great change at death is created under any circumstances, and to persons of every character; but, to the saint suddenly taken away, the change is marvellous indeed. *In a few moments* to pass from the activities and toil of earth to the repose of heaven; to go from scenes where the sight of misery met the eye, and its sighs the ear, to gaze on "the Lamb in the midst of the throne," and listen to the "new song," and "the voice of harpers harping with their harps;" to be

purified from the last stain of sin, and be made perfect in holiness for ever; to put off the armour and quit the camp, to wave the palm of victory and wear the crown of triumph. A change so amazing and instantaneous may find a faint image in the case of Adam, starting up, under the divinely plastic hand, out of "the dust of the ground" into the full maturity of mental and holy manhood amid the beauty and fruitfulness of the paradise of God.

The importance and necessity of constant preparedness for the dying hour. Some of our old divines made a distinction between *actual* and *habitual* meetness for death. In the sense which they meant, this distinction was valid. Nevertheless, he who should be habitually unprepared to die might justly conclude that he was not, in any sense, at all fitted for the solemn act. Admonished by sudden instances of dissolution like the one that I have sketched, let professing Christians keep the stern foe in view, and place their affections on treasures which he cannot touch. Let them heed the counsel thus tersely given them by one of our writers: "when you lie down at night compose your spirits, as if you were not to awake till the heavens be no more. And when you awake in the morning consider that new day as your last, and live accordingly. Surely that night cometh of which you will never see the morning, or that morning of which you will never see the night; but which of your mornings or nights will be such you know not. Let the mantle of worldly enjoyments hang loose about you, that it may be easily dropped when death comes to carry you into another world."

Let the reader of this brief narrative who is altogether unprepared for the hour of death, bear in mind that, while sudden death to the Christian is sudden glory, it is to the unconverted sudden and endless woe; that, so dying, they will bear a fatal resemblance to "the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven." Let them heed the command, "Prepare to meet thy God," and learn that faith in the Saviour, accompanied by holiness of life, is absolutely essential to preparation for the meeting.

RAIN AND RELIGION.

BY REV. A. J. GORDON.

Of all the hindrances which the services of the sanctuary have to encounter, *rain* is one of the most serious. It has probably been the cause of more empty pews, of more wasted Sabbaths, of more disastrous failures in Sunday work and Sunday worship than any other single thing. I say the *cause*. I mean of course the *ostensible* cause. There is a religious zeal that is entirely impervious to rain—a zeal which it never dampens or chills. There is such a thing as a waterproof Christianity, and no one can overestimate its value or praise too highly its quality. But there is on the other hand a zeal so sensitive, so delicately alive to the influence of moisture, that it seems practically impossible to make it do service except in clear weather. So that while the rain is the apparent cause, the real cause is not *meteorological* but *moral*.

This becomes apparent if we reflect upon the singular difference in the influence of the rain on week days and on Sundays. A week day rain has no power to keep a single man from attending to his business. The exposure required, the distance to go in the storm may be twenty times as great, yet it never occurs to an active business man that the rain in this case furnishes any reasonable ground for neglect of duty. So glaring is the contrast between the effects of the Sunday and the week day rain, that one might almost suppose that the former contained some peculiarly subtle and injurious qualities that were wanting in the latter—that it was laden with some peculiarly deleterious influences, capable of endangering health and constitution. A Sunday rain! what is there of all the phenomena of nature so potent? It need come in no black and furious torrent, with the sound of thunder and the lurid glare of lightnings. Let it but drop from heaven in the gentlest distillations, and hundreds of people stop in their purpose to go up to the house of God; the

aisles of worship are empty; the songs of praise are feeble, and instead of the inspiration and power of a great congregation, there is presented the uninspiring spectacle of a meagre band of worshippers struggling to carry on the service, to keep alive the dying devotion and the languishing hallelujahs.

And how shall we account for this singular fact? There is but *one* explanation. Outward things act unfavourably upon us, not only in proportion to their strength, but in proportion to our weakness. The power of disease is gauged by the feebleness of its patient; and the force of untoward circumstances by the weakness of an untoward subject. *Things are to us what we are to them.*

Now if we make our estimate of the influence of rain upon any Christian congregation, will not the proportion be somewhat as follows? Very serious according as there is much religious indifference and spiritual irresolution. Very slight according as there is a lively interest and a hearty zeal concerning the things pertaining to God's house. That being so, what a perfect *barometer* a rainy day congregation furnishes for measuring the state of religious interest and the degree of appreciation put upon the sermon and other exercises by the people. For after a few years observation, the minister becomes able to sit in his place and read the *variations* in higher and lower degrees along the scale of pews. There is brother A. A few years observation has showed us that though he lives a long distance from the church, he is utterly unaffected by any condition of rain or dampness. He is always present. A Sunday rain is to him precisely as a week day rain—a matter never to be thought of as a hindrance to duty—and from this meteorological observation, we soon become able to deduce an estimate of his *religious* state—that he is very much in earnest; believes his Christian obligations to be just as sacred as his business obligations; and regards a detention from the house of God as so great a privation that only serious sickness or positive inability can effect it. There is brother B. A very slight rain, on the contrary, affects him seriously, and renders his place in the sanctuary vacant. But our judgment concerning him is not that he is totally *wanting* in religious interest, nor that he has a very positive zeal. *Luke warm* is about his degree on the scale. He is so nicely balanced between hot and cold that a very slight rain disturbs his equilibrium and causes him to preponderate in favour of absence from church and neglect of duty. Here is another who does not need an actual fall of rain to keep him at home. Like Elijah's servant, he sees the cloud afar off, even though it be no bigger than a man's hand, and hears in it "a sound of abundance of rain." Our conclusion concerning him must be inevitably, that he tends so decidedly in the direction of indifference to duty, that an excuse for neglecting it is positively desirable and eagerly sought. And there is a still lower degree on the scale—the Gallio, caring for none of these things—who can detect even in the invisible atmospheric moisture, an abundant justification for absenting himself from church or Sunday school or prayer meeting.

Thus we see how outward hindrances, as we call them, to our attention to duty, are largely the creation of inward disinclinations. Obstacles are great or small to us, just according as we project into them our spiritual ennui and irresolution, or surmount them with our moral earnestness and Christian fidelity. Man is the master of nature, not its timid slave and vassal. Napoleon's grand answer to a too cautious general who was dissuading him from a certain movement on the ground that *circumstances* were unfavourable to it, is worthy to be the motto of every Christian. "Sir, I make circumstances." If we cannot make circumstances, we shall be unmade by them. Is it for members of the church who have entered into solemn compact "not to forsake the assembling of themselves together," to break their compact over such a slight excuse as a wet Sunday? Are we such pliant subjects of heat and cold, cloud and storm that we shall allow them to cheat us out of our spiritual birthright and our religious privileges? If we forget what our religious obligations require of us, we ought not to forget what our civilisation requires of us.

We live in an age of *umbrellas* and water tight *garments*. And yet in spite

of all these protections, how many of us allow the rain to keep us away from the sanctuary. Oh the rain! one of God's sweetest charities to a needy and dependent earth, how much harm it has done us! How it has melted our soluble zeal and caused it to evaporate in indifference and inertness! How many "a half a mind to go to church" has it precipitated into a culpable and most injurious "stay at home." *Out of how many eagerly anticipated opportunities of meeting the wants of a certain hearer, or class of hearers, has it cheated the preacher!* How many a specious plea, how many a wicked excuse has it furnished for neglect of duty! Ah! of many a man's devotion to religion and zeal for the house of God, it can be said, as of the house of the foolish man, "And the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

GOD IS LOVE.

WHAT a blessed revelation is this of the character of that God from whom we have wandered; whose wrath we have deserved; and whose favour we could never merit: and what gracious and abundant proof do the Scriptures afford us of its truth. Love! What is it? It is the purest and loftiest passion that can dwell in the human breast. But Divine love.—Think of *it*. It is as much above human love as heaven is higher than earth. But not only in its *nature* is it thus great and glorious; its *manifestation* is more glorious. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"; but "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Human love at best is poor when mentioned beside the love of God; "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet, peradventure, for a good man some would even dare to die; but God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." We should never have loved God had he not loved us; for, "he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen?" And Paul shows us our picture by nature when he says that we were "hateful, and hating one another." At the same time, he shows us that it was "after that the love and kindness of God our Saviour toward man appeared," that we were brought into that blessed state in which we begin to love; and this, "not by works of righteousness which we have done," but from *His* mercy, love, and grace, shed upon us through Christ Jesus. If, then, "we have known and believed the love which God hath to us," it will be our joy and our strength to meditate much upon it. And in order to direct our thoughts, we will mention a few particulars to assist us in contemplating this glorious theme,—God is love.

1.—*This love is infinite.* When you can estimate the worth of "the only begotten Son of God," then you may be able to measure the length, grasp the breadth, scale the height, and sound the depth of the love of God. "For God *so* loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son."

> "To us our God his love commends,
> When by our sins undone,
> That He might spare his enemies,
> He did not spare his Son."

While then we look to Calvary, gaze and wonder, and admire the infinitude of God's love, let us take the practical consolation thereby given us. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall He not with him also freely give us *all* things."

2.—*This love is everlasting.* It has not sprung into existence since we began to be, nor can we find its origin even at Calvary, wondrous though that scene be, telling us of infinite love; it only expresses a fact which is elsewhere revealed. "When," we ask as we turn to the lively oracles, "did God begin to love?" and we get for answer "I have loved thee with an *everlasting* love." Ere we had done either good or evil, He loved us; knowing we would do evil,

he loved us; when we were doing evil, he loved us; and with loving-kindness drew us from the evil of our ways; and though we are still in ourselves unworthy of his love, still, as we realise our standing in Christ the Son of his love, we can sing

"So dear, so very dear to God, more dear I cannot be;
The love wherewith He loves his Son, such is his love to me."

This love being everlasting, we may again take the strong consolation of Rom. viii., and say, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" "I am persuaded that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

3.—*This love is omnipotent.* What is there which the love of God cannot accomplish? An earthly friend, with strong professions of love, proffers you his assistance in a time of need. He talks as if he would do anything within the compass of his means or abilities. But the moment you name that which you really require, he shrinks back and says, "It is utterly out of my power to accomplish," which too often means that it would be too great a sacrifice for him to make. But God so loved as to give his only begotten Son; and Christ "loved the church, and gave himself for it." And as no sacrifice was too great for God's love to bestow, so no object to be attained is beyond its power to secure. It can melt the hardest heart, and subdue the most stubborn will; and where hatred has hitherto reigned, love—God's love—can set up its throne. Again we say, "what comfort and strength does this afford the believer as he contemplates that love which is omnipotent in its power, causing him to exclaim, "If God be for us, who can be against us." And what makes all this the more precious is the knowledge that

4.—*This love is unchangeable.* With our God "there is no variableness nor shadow of turning." His dealings with us may often *seem* to change, as if his love changed; but this cannot be. If He smiles, we rejoice in his love; and if he chastens, 'tis still a proof of love; "for whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth." And if at any time we have to complain of the loss of the light of His countenance, we must look for the cause in ourselves. He is the same.

"And if our dearest comforts fall,
Before His sovereign will;
He never takes away our all,
He is our portion still."

Yes, ours at all times, for all time, and beyond all time, our portion for ever.

The sun in the firmament always shines, but we do not always enjoy the light and warmth which his beams impart. Why? *First*, Because every night the portion of the earth upon which we dwell turns away from the sun; and, *secondly*, often for many days the clouds and mists which arise from the earth, obscures his shining from our eyes. But if, as we turn again toward the sun, the wind comes from the hollow of Jehovah's hand and chases all cloud and mist away, we rejoice again in the full effulgence of his light. Would we then continually rejoice in the God of love? Let us be constantly "looking unto Jesus," where we behold the love of God in its fullest and most glorious manifestation; and if clouds from within, or mist from the world around, hide him from our sight, let us take up the record of God's love, and look up for that Spirit whose office it is to take of the things of Christ, and shew them unto us, that he might shine upon the sacred page, and thus chase away all darkness and doubt from our minds; and enable us to say again, as by faith we gaze upon "Christ crucified," "Yes, God is love; and this God is our God; He will be our guide even unto death, and our portion for ever," for

"He loved us from the first of time,"

and

"He'll love us to the last."

Then,

"Why should I ever careful be,
Since such a God is mine;

He watches o'er me night and day,
And tells me, 'mine is thine.'"

Paisley. J. M. HUDSON.

Obituary.

ELIZABETH RAWLINSON, OF GRANTHAM.

ELIZABETH RAWLINSON, an esteemed member of the Baptist Church, Grantham, departed this life January 10th, 1869, aged seventy-four years. She was brought to know the Lord about nine years ago, under a sermon preached in Bath Cottage school-room, by Mr. H. Watts, then of Golcar: and was baptised by him shortly afterwards, at Bottesford. As she was then sixty-five years of age she dreaded going through the water, but an ardent desire to obey her Lord's commands caused her to overcome every scruple; and she enjoyed the ordinance so much that she declared afterwards that "she felt as if she could go through it every day." It may be truly said of her that her Christian life gave evidence of the genuineness of her conversion. She was much attached to the people of God, and a regular attendant on the means of grace. Though poor in this world's goods, and able to give but little in support of the Lord's cause, yet what she gave she did not give grudgingly, but of a willing mind. She kept her bed for many weeks, but during the whole of a painful illness she constantly bore testimony to the faithfulness of Jesus in the fulfilment of his promises, and declared that he was precious to her soul. A few minutes before she died, she noticed some of the members of her family weeping around her. She told them not to weep for her, but for themselves. She then waved her hand saying—"Jesus has just passed by and I am going to heaven where there will be no sorrow nor pain, and where God shall wipe away all tears from off all faces." Having thus spoken, she peacfully closed her eyes and departed to be for ever with the Lord.

Correspondence.

EXPULSION OF IMMORAL MINISTERS.

To the Editor of the Primitive Church Magazine.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I have read an article on the duty of church members holding up the hands of their pastors by my esteemed friend *A. S.*, of *Little Leigh*, with pleasure. There is one sentence in that excellent article, however, to which I take exception. Our brother says, "If a minister should be an immoral man, let the whole church through its deacons ask such a man to resign." "Such a man," he very properly observes, "is neither fit to be a minister nor a member of a Christian church." But is there any warrant in the word of God to request either a minister or member to resign? I think not. The following remarks of Andrew Fuller are well worthy of attention. "In matters of discipline," says he, "few churches would suffer a grossly immoral or litigious character to continue among them unnoticed; but if, instead of a calm, impartial, and decided procedure, we enter into pusillanimous compromises with the offender, consenting that he should withdraw of his own accord, are we not carnal, and walk as men? The private withdrawment of an individual if it be without good reasons, may justify a church in admonishing him, and if he cannot be reclaimed, in excluding him; but it cannot itself dissolve the relation. Till such exclusion has taken place he is a member, and his conduct affects their reputation as much as that of any other member." The same rule that

applies to unworthy *members*, I think should be applied to unworthy *ministers*. Instead of requesting them to resign, they ought to be publicly deposed from the ministry, and solemnly excluded from the communion of the church. "*Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person*" (1 Cor. v. 13).

The private resignation of unworthy ministers is most injurious in its tendency. A minister is, *e.g.*, guilty of drunkenness at A., and *resigns*; afterwards he becomes pastor of the church at B., where the crime is repeated under an aggravated form, and *resigns*; next he accepts the invitation of the church at C., where the same scene is acted over again, and *resigns*; and after all this, he is publicly recognised at D., and it may be, his recognition is paraded in the newspapers. I am sure Brother A. S. would disapprove of this; but such things do happen. I once supplied a church whose minister had publicly disgraced himself, and the church not only accepted of his resignation, but gave him a flattering testimonial. I was asked to dispense the Lord's supper, but refused to do so, as I regarded them as accomplices in the crime. In order to prevent such occurrences, I think there should be a public *trial*, and a public *expulsion*. This would tend greatly to preserve the purity of the church as well as the purity of the ministry, and would prove a useful guard against imposition.

There are many things in the American churches of which I do not approve; but one thing I like well, and that is, all their business is done *openly*, and in the face of the *public*.—*No closed doors*.

The spirit of our brother's article is excellent, and his practical remarks much required. May it be attended with the Divine blessing. Yours in Christian love, JOHN BROWN.

Cascade, W. Dubuque, Iowa, U. S., America, 19th Feb., 1869.

P.S.—I question the propriety of any communication being made between a church and its minister through the medium of any deputation whatever, unless in the case of *wilful absence*; because this would seem to imply that a church might meet to discuss a minister's character *behind* his back, and consequently, that he might not have an opportunity of defending himself. Why should not the communication be *direct*.

Poetry.

LYRICS FOR THE HEART.—"TRUTH."

BY W. POOLE BALFERN.

By the way side poor and weary,
Lone her homestead cold and dreary;
Eyes all swollen, red with weeping,
With the outcasts often sleeping;
Feet all sore and scarred and bleeding,
To her tears and moans few heeding;
Lies fair truth her sweet voice pleading,
Words of love and wisdom reading.

Lives she as a sad disaster,
Scant her clothing like her master;
Well she's housed, though in a stable,
Hers the crumbs from rich man's table;
Learnéd hate for ever leering,
Thoughtless crowds for ever jeering;
Thus she lives, and lives as ever,
Men to wound her think it clever.

Round her temples thorns still cleaving,
Still the scorn of unbelieving;
Still a reed her right hand grasping,
Empty brains vain questions asking;

Now exposed to shame and spitting,
Youngsters verbal crotchets splitting;
Lives she now as lived she yonder,
Many hate and many wonder.

Still with all this idle dreaming,
Empty prattle, hollow seeming;
Still with all her woes and weeping,
Truth shall have a long sweet greeting;
Those who live her shame despising,
Ne'er shall see her bright uprising;
Here who will not share her sorrow
Shall not see her bright to morrow.

Page for the Young.

LESSONS WITH MY YOUNG PEOPLE.

Reading the 19th Chapter of Exodus.

"The young people reading the chapter verse by verse publicly."

Now, give us passages to show that it is our duty to obey God.

Gen. xxii. 1, 2, 3, 17, 18; Exodus xix. 5, 8; Exodus xx. 6; Deut. v. 27 to 33; Deut. xxvi. 16; Psalm cxix. 4, 6; Prov. iii. 1; Isaiah xlviii. 18; Jer. vii. 23; Matt. vii. 21; Matt. xi. 30; Acts v. 33; James i. 21; Rev. xxii. 14.

QUESTIONS.

Q.—How often does the word which is used for the name of God occur in the Old Testament?

A.—Elohim, the word most frequently employed, occurs about 2,500 times in Hebrew, and is a word in the plural number, the singular being Eloah, which is also used for the name of God, but which occurs only 60 times in the Hebrew text. Both these words are derived from the word El, another name for God which is most frequently used in the poetical parts of the Old Testament; and in compound words, such as Peni-el, the face of God, Israel, a Prince of God. El signifies strength or might; hence El and Eloah signify the strong or mighty one, and Elohim the strong or mighty ones. All these are names of God who is the only strong or mighty one, the Almighty. The word usually employed in our version is God, a Saxon word signifying good. The word Elohim then signifies the Almighty, Omnipotent, or Adorable. Thus in Genesis i. 1, "In the beginning, the Omnipotent created the heaven and the earth." The late venerable Dr. Fawcett observes that it is very remarkable that the name given to the former of all things is plural, Elohim. Yet, this is joined to singular verbs. The Scriptures speak of the Son and the Holy Spirit being concerned in the work of creation as well as the Father, John i. 1; Genesis i. 2. Hence the mysterious expressions of Him who is the one only living and true God.—Let us make man in *our* image; after our likeness. Behold the man is become like *one of us*.

Q.—Where was Moses when God came to him in order to inform him that he must go and deliver the Israelites out of Egypt?

A.—Keeping the flock of his father-in-law in Midian; and leading his flock, he came to the "mountain of God," even to Horeb (Exodus iii. 1). Two names are given to his father-in-law—Jethro and Reuel—as chapter ii. 18. This was not unusual at that time. It is called the "mountain of God,"—a large and high mountain. The same expression is translated, (Psalm xxxvi. 6,) "great mountains." On this range of mountains God afterwards gave the law, so that it might on that account be called the "mountain of God" (Exodus xix). Other events transpired on this mountain. Here in Horeb, Moses was to smite the rock to give the people water (Exodus xvii. 5, 7); Moses striking the rock in a passion, &c. (Numbers xx. 7, 13); and Elijah came unto

Horeb the "mount of God," and God said unto him "What doest thou here, Elijah?" Horeb or Sinai is a famous mountain of Arabia—the rocky; it stands on the south of the bosom of the Red Sea, between the Gulf of Colzum on the West, and the Elanitic Gulf on the east. It is about 200 miles eastward of Cairo, in Egypt. From the top of this mountain, God proclaimed his law to the Hebrews, from amidst terrible flames of fire, &c. And Midian is a district of Arabia, on the eastern coast of the Red Sea near to Mount Sinai; and a well is pointed out as that at which Moses watered the flocks of Jethro. The Midianites are supposed to have descended from Midian, the fourth son of Abraham by Keturah, who inhabited the land of Midian (Genesis xxv. 2).

Q.—How many brothers and sisters had David, and their names?

A.—He had seven brothers and two sisters. David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem, of Judah, whose name was Jesse, and he had eight sons, and the man went for an old man in the days of Saul (1 Samuel xvii. 12). Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel, and Samuel said unto Jesse, "The Lord hath not chosen these." And Samuel said unto Jesse, "Are here all thy children" (See 1 Samuel xvi. 10, 11). The names of his sons were "Eliab, Abinadab, Shumah, Nathaniel, Raddai, Ozem the sixth, and David the seventh" (1 Chron. ii. 13, 14). His sisters names were Zeruiah and Abigail (v. 16). The name of the eighth son of Jesse is not given. He is supposed to have been dead before David's elevation to the throne of Israel.

Sunnyside. A. N.

A SHORT ADDRESS TO THE ENQUIRERS.

We take it, my young friends, for granted that such persons are present with us this evening, who are deeply concerned respecting the salvation of their souls. And we wish you to remember that you are immortal creatures—beings born for eternity—creatures who will never go out of existence. Are you asking what must I do to be saved?

Pray that God would render your impressions permanent by the effectual operations of his spirit. Give up what you know to be sinful. Augustine confessed that he used to pray that God would convert him, but with this reservation, "Lord, not yet." There are some persons in our congregations who seem afraid to be converted. It is of great consequence that you separate yourselves from irreligious and worldly companions. "They will say, come with us; cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse" (Prov. i. 11, 16). "Come out from among them and be separate, saith the Lord," &c. (2 Cor. vi. 14, 18). This will require some courage and decision of character. Search the scriptures regularly and connectedly. The Bible is a sublime—a beautiful whole—and Jerome said "Ignorance of the scriptures is ignorance of Christ." Diligently attend the means of grace; associate with the prayerful; and communicate your thoughts and feelings to your minister and most pious friends. Seek after scriptural knowledge—to understand the plan of salvation and work of the spirit. See that your repentance is genuine, including conviction, self-abasement, sorrow for sin, and reformation of character.

"'Tis not enough to say I'm sorry and repent,
And go from day to day just as I ever went."

Let your faith be simple—child-like. Faith in Christ is to believe what the Scriptures say of him—his person, offices, and work. To take God at his word—gladly to receive it—to look—to come to Christ—to lay hold upon him as revealed in the Bible to the rejection of every other ground of dependence, which would interfere with an entire reliance upon Christ for salvation and eternal life.

N.B.—If our young friends wish for more information on this important subject, I would recommend them to read the Rev. John Angell James' "Anxious Enquirer," and we should be glad to see you at the class meeting.

A. N.

Reviews.

The Life of Mr. Robert Gate, with some Notices of Early Methodism in the Penrith Circuit. By George G. S. Thomas. Cloth. Pp. 172. London: Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster-row, E.C.

This is a book of special interest to Methodists, but which may be profitably read by Christians of all denominations. It is the record of a holy life passed in the Lord's service, and must prove stimulative to zeal and devotedness. Such works are of *real* value. They are vastly to be preferred to the most popular of our religious novels, with their sentimental heroes and heroines, and their absurd sensationalism. The life of Mr. Robert Gate is an admirable specimen of profitable Christian biography. We shall rejoice to see many more such books issuing from the press. He who produces such contributions to our literature, does a service to the age, for he assists to furnish both a substitute and an antidote to the prevalent rage for fiction.

Mr. Robert Gate was born in 1780, was born again in 1805, began to preach in 1807, was married in 1808, and appointed a class leader in the same year, and died a happy and triumphant death in 1866, in the 87th year of his age. He lived in eventful times, and from his conversion to his death was incessantly at work for God. Hundreds of souls were led by his labours to the Saviour's feet. He was a Wesleyan local preacher to the last, besides being a diligent visitor of the poor and the sick. In the year 1862, when he was 82 years of age, he made 1,825 visits, and of those he had visited, 48 died during the year. And yet, up to his 68th year, Mr. Gate was actively engaged in a secular business. Verily, he was an earnest worker for God, and a bright ornament to the church of Christ!

We have pleasure, too, in stating that the author of the life of Mr. Gate has executed his task in a pleasant and judicious style. The peculiarities of Methodism are never needlessly obtruded. The story is told in a plain familiar way without any straining after effect, and without any needless and wearisome amplifications. The reader is carried along with unflagging interest from the commencement to the close. May this record of the Christian zeal of Mr. Robert Gate be the means of provoking many to love and good works!

It is a pity that Baptists as a body are so little given to preserving the memory of their "sainted" dead. How many worthies have risen, laboured, suffered, and died among us, whose biographies would have made noble volumes, but of whose bright examples the church possesses no memorial! The Greeks and Jews were alike in one thing; they persecuted their sages and prophets in their life-time; killed them; and then built them magnificent tombs and monuments. But Baptists seem as a rule to neglect their best and bravest sons in life; and to forget them as soon as they are dead. And yet, what splendid specimens of profitable Christian biography might be culled from the records of our churches! It is time we mended our ways in this matter. A line or two of "obituary" in *The Baptist Hand-book* is a poor memorial for men who serve their day and generation as some of our brethren have done. But their record is on high.

The London Quarterly Review. No. lxiii. April. Pp. 268. London: Elliot Stock.

Our old friend The London Quarterly gives us in this number a rich and varied repast. All the articles are admirably written, and will repay a careful perusal. But the first is the most valuable by far. It is a trenchant exposure of that great dealer in German "marine stores," Dr. Samuel Davidson. In its 41 pages, the dogmatism, the utter lack of judgment and logical power, the facility of guessing instead of demonstrating, the heavy learned lumber, the ignoring of all English scholarship, and the sla-

vish worship of everything German, which have *grouingly* characterised Dr. Samuel Davidson's works, are quietly but mercilessly exposed. His Introduction to the New Testament, published in 1848, we have possessed since its appearance, and *it* is sufficiently destructive in its criticism; but this one, published in 1868, is infinitely worse. During the twenty intervening years, Dr. S. Davidson has grown downwards, and has become more and more "advanced" in the direction of what we must call *infidelity*. Where he will end is known only to God; but his theological movements have, so far, all been in one direction,—*away from the truth*, and destructive of our faith in Christianity itself.

But Dr. Samuel Davidson is being estimated at his proper value. Dr. Pusey very recently exposed his incompetence in the matter of Hebrew criticism; and others have very successfully laid bare his utter untrustworthiness in dealing with New Testament matters. In short, Dr. S. Davidson is a great reader, but a wretched reasoner; very learned, but utterly illogical; an immense collector of other men's opinions, while his own judgments are not worth a straw; a wholesale destructive and revolutionist, but without the slightest particle of creative faculty; most credulous of his own guesses and fancies, but bitterly incredulous of the authenticity and genuineness of the sacred records; a pedant, without the smallest scintillation of genius.

But we forget that we are not reviewing Dr. S. Davidson's Introduction, but *The London Quarterly Review for April*, which latter publication we can cordially recommend as able, scholarly, rigidly orthodox, and at the same time, pleasant and popular in its style. The review of Dr. S. Davidson is alone worth the cost of the whole book. May our readers never be corrupted from the simple gospel of Christ!

"*Let us not rend it.*" An appeal for Unity. Addressed to all the Members of the Church of England. By a Clergyman of the Diocese of Oxford. Pp. 16. London: William Macintosh, 24, Paternoster-row.

THIS is a well-meant, but weak effusion. It is an *ad misericordiam* appeal to Evangelicals and Romanists to live lovingly side by side in the same Church Establishment. The writer is evidently an Evangelical, but anxious that every school of thought and theological opinion should live together in the Establishment as a sort of *happy family*. The style, too, is utterly destitute of vigour, abounding with *ohs*; such as, "Oh, fellow-ministers—Oh, fellow-brethren—Oh, these things—Oh, be content"—all in one page, the eleventh. The writer deprecates "a separation, a state of Nonconformity, wherein every priest and congregation shall do what seemeth good in their sight," (P. 10); but in our view, the only thing that will save the Episcopal Church of England from utter ruin is her entire Disestablishment and Disendowment by the State. The sister church in Ireland is going to have that remedy tried upon her, though sadly against her own will. We doubt not the regimen will prove a great blessing to her, and that the day is not far distant when the Episcopal Church of England will undergo the same process, and with the like result. The Oxfordshire Clergyman's tract reminds us of Mrs. Partington's mop, which was as likely to dry up the Atlantic as this effusion is to arrest the Disestablishment and Disendowment tendency of the age.

"*Go up Higher!*" By G. HUNT JACKSON. Pp. 18. London: Elliot Stock.

THIS is a short but very suggestive and beautiful discourse on Luke xiv. 10. It may be read in a few minutes, but the thoughts will abide long after their perusal.

Old Jonathan. For 1868. London: W. H. Collingridge, 117 to 120, Aldersgate-street, E.C.

OLD Jonathan is an ever welcome visitor in our family circle, and we cordially receive him in his dress for 1868. This volume is in point of interest fully equal to any that have preceded it, both as to the illustrations and literary matter.

We have also received

Topics for Teachers. Parts IV. and V., which are very excellent.

The Scattered Nation, for February and March, which are full of interest for all who love the seed of Abraham.

The Church and *The Hive* for the same months; both very good.

The Appeal; as stirring as ever.

The above are all by Elliot Stock.

The Sower and *The Little Gleaner*, for February and March; both by Houlston and Wright.

The Gospel Magazine and Protestant Beacon, for February and March. Full of Protestant truth, and of sound experimental divinity.

Mr. Geissler's Column.

SAXONY.

My esteemed Brother Shaw.—With the following I give you a translation of a statement from Brother Baumgärtner who now labours as a missionary in Saxony since last autumn

"It was in October last when I, having arrived here from the East of Prussia, commenced my labours in Saxony. I first undertook several journeys through the kingdom and the duchy of Saxony to acquaint myself with the various stations and their members. In the kingdom of Saxony I found that religious meetings were strictly prohibited, and that I had to venture the holding of such in looking the more to the Lord who sent us and who has all power in heaven and in earth. And he graciously has helped us to hold larger and smaller meetings in various places. So, for instance, in Meerane, where I was imprisoned last spring because I had preached the gospel there, I have of late preached repeatedly again, and also other brethren, as Taber and Geissler, have gathered large assemblies without any interruption from the police. It seems as if the state will gradually grant us the liberty which we have taken. Everywhere I find among the people here a great, almost a pagan spiritual darkness, but at the same time there exists also a desire to hear the gospel, and the longer I think of it the more I get persuaded that it could nowhere be more necessary to preach the gospel then it is here.

"In the Duchy of S. Altenburg, where I have my head-quarter, my activity could not be much for the first few months because I had first to get a recognition from the authority to preach publicly. I then asked such a recognition in a special petition to which I added the demanded certificates. The Lord now has helped us also in this respect, and answered our prayers; for a few weeks ago, I got a writing from the state ministry of the Duchy, which says:—

'The Baptist church here has asked the state to grant their newly chosen pastor, A. Baumgärtner, the permission to stay here as its pastor, and to preach the word of God where he finds an opportunity for it. The state ministry, having taken knowledge of his certificates, have now resolved to grant the petition of the church and to allow Mr. B. to act as a minister of the gospel in the Duchy of Saxony, Altenburg, etc.'

"We rejoice at this success, and praise the Lord for having induced the heart of the authority to grant us this liberty. In consequence of it, I at once announced our regular services in the papers, which brought us at once a larger attendance.

"Indeed there is great necessity of preaching the gospel in these Saxon territories; by all their education they know nothing of God, they are chained as by Satan in the fetters of unbelief, and seek only the pleasures of this world. We therefore groan:—'Oh, that the salvation of Israel were come (or came) out of Zion,' etc. (Psalms xiv. 7).

"'Dear brethren! As I heard from our brother Geissler that he has already asked your much needed help in carrying on the good work in Saxony, also through my feeble instru-

mentality; may I now be permitted to unite my petition with his, for even the least help from you would be of great value here. The churches here are doing what they can to support me, but they are not able to raise even the half of the most necessary means. Besides this, I lost most of my property by the removing from the east of Prussia to this country, and I cannot yet procure again all needful furniture. Will you, therefore, kindly remember me, and send us your desired help to the good cause in Saxony. With the best salutations I am in Christian love,

"Your Fellow Labourer,

"A. BAUMGÄRTNER."

Adding a few words to this letter, I would, first of all, heartily recommend to you, to your love and your prayers, our brother B., and beseech you to do what possibly you can do for him. He is not only an excellent Christian and workman in the Lord's vineyard, but also a much needed labourer. The field here, consisting of the kingdom, the province, and the duchies of Saxony, is a large one, the state of the people cries loud for our activity and preaching of the truth, and it seems now as if the bulwarks of tyranny of conscience and all the mighty hindrances to the preaching of the gospel are going gradually away. Next Friday for instance, I shall make a special journey to a chief town in the kingdom of Saxony, to hold a lecture there. Brother B. has hired the largest hall there and got the permission for such a meeting from the Bailiff. As there still exists the prohibition of preaching, I call my sermons lectures and go instead of as a missionary under the name of a lecturer. Never mind about the name which makes a great deal of difference with the world; we, however, will look more after the matter, and may the Lord Jesus only help us that our lectures be such as he himself delivered on the mountain, and that they may be blessed to the conversion of many, whilst by the "sermons" of the clergy, the people sink by troops into perdition.

A few weeks ago I was in Altenburg, and preached thrice there on a Sabbath. For the Monday evening the members had hired the largest and finest hall, the town hall, when, as the papers had announced, I would give a lecture on "the Baptists, who they are, what they believe, and where they came from?" a lecture which I have been already asked to read in various places. The hall, spacious as it is, was crowded, and the truth listened to quietly.

The Sunday following, when I was in Halle, we held, after I had conducted the various services of the day, a church meeting to hear two applicants for baptism. Joyfully they were received, for we could, what always is the best, feel it by their words, that they had with us one Lord and one faith and needed only, what they asked for, the scriptural baptism. Singularly one of these candidates, formerly a real worldly man, had read the tract "Hasten and rescue thy soul, or the fearful consequences of procrastination," a tract which I wrote several years ago and which has been the means of several conversions already. But how difficult it is to convert a sinner, so that all angels and all men never could accomplish it, and how our God must do always the most and the best. This man, having received deep impressions from the truth in the tract, would not through all that yield to God, but go on in his sinful career; the day after this, however, he by a walk through the town fell under a heavy cart, when it was through the special providence of God that he was not crushed to death. At once, when he saw himself thus in the jaws of death the serious warnings of the tract stood before his soul and now became mighty through the spirit of God, so that now whilst his body was saved his heart was crushed, and he became another man. At the baptism which took place that Sunday night in the river Saale, under the beautiful light of the moon, there were a great many strangers present, as I had announced it before. With the Lord's help I gave them a short explanation of our doings, which I proved them to be the wise invention and gracious order of God.

Repeatedly I have had, also of late, opportunities to proclaim the truth in new places, where hitherto we had no entrance. The Lord, praise be to him,

has been with us, he granted me health and strength, gave us open doors, and blessed his word. Still, we deeply feel that an outpouring of his Holy Spirit is wanted, and that we should call and cry for it with all our heart. We earnestly wish that all the churches of Christ would unite in special prayers for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as all success depends upon him! Asking your future sympathy and prayers for us, our churches and our work, which all are yours too,

I am, Yours truly,

MORITZ GRIESSLER.

Halle, Saxony.
March 10th.

Intelligence.

STRICT BAPTIST MISSION.

ORDINATION OF MR. ANDRIESZ.

IN connection with the above Mission in Colombo, an interesting and impressive service was held on the evening of February 2nd, to set apart publicly Mr. Andriesz, one of the missionaries (a Portuguese by birth), for mission service. The meeting was held at the Pettah Baptist Chapel, kindly lent for the occasion. The chapel was well filled. Mr. Van Geyzel, on behalf of the Strict Baptist Mission in England, stated that Mr. Andriesz, having fulfilled a term of probation in connection with the Mission, was now received as its accredited agent in Colombo. The Chairman, after reading suitable portions of Scripture, called upon Mr. Andriesz to give some particulars of his call by grace, and to the work of the ministry.

Mr. Andriesz then gave a long and most interesting statement, from which we give the following condensed report:—

"From my earliest years I had been accustomed to lead a morally good life, and was a regular attendant at the Dutch Presbyterian church. When I was a youth, I believed it my duty to join a church, so I joined the Walfendahl church by its prescribed form, that of being confirmed. I was after that a strict attendant on the means of grace, and had a great desire to establish prayer meetings, though I knew not how they should be conducted. I thought by all this I should please God, and get admission into heaven. I never once thought that I was a sinner before God, and if any had told me so I should certainly have been angry. One day I had occasion to visit a friend, a morally good man, who gave me a book he had got from a Christian soldier, called 'Hell opened to Christians.' I began to read it, and while doing so terror seized my heart. From that time I began anxiously to search the Scriptures, to see whether all was right. Then hidden sins appeared like mountains to my view. I made a book, resolving to guard henceforth against committing such and such sins, and then went on resolving, breaking, and re-resolving, till I was tired of myself. The scales fell from my eyes, and I clearly saw that I was a lost sinner, utterly undone and ruined.' Then all the terrible things I read of in that book came against me, and for the first time I knelt down with fear to pray. I took my Portuguese New Testament in my hands, and two passages came before me:—'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin,' and, 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' Trying to grasp these, I had grace given to me, and was enabled to believe with joy that Jesus *had* obtained the pardon of my sins, and that God was reconciled to me through *him*. But the devil was not quiet, and tried to upset my mind by doubts as to whether I had not committed the sin against the Holy Ghost. I was again put to it, until, by my Testament, with the help of a commentary, my mind was settled. And now the same blessed Spirit that convinced me of sin, and brought me to the foot of the cross, instilled into my heart a strong desire to make the precious gospel known to others. I was now twenty-five years of age, and still kept my place in the church of my childhood. About this time, however, a friend of mine and a fellow labourer with whom I often took sweet counsel, became a Baptist. This was a great cross to me. I often had conversations with him, but was not convinced. In the year 1859, I first witnessed the ordinance of believers' baptism as administered by the late Mr. James Allen, Baptist missionary in Colombo, who brought such convincing proofs

from Scripture, that I was struck down like a bird, and could not escape. On coming out, a friend advised me to consult Mr. Blake, the Wesleyan minister, who would have as good proofs for infant sprinkling. I did so, but found to my astonishment that instead of proving this, he went on to show from the Greek, Dutch, Portuguese, and Singalese languages, that the only mode is dipping, and the only right subjects believers. I went home convinced, but still not willing to act on my convictions till I heard that Mr. Blake himself had been baptised; and so at length I was baptised by Mr. Allen in this very chapel, in July, 1859. I now thought if I could devote myself wholly to the service of Christ, it would be my greatest blessing; but my close occupation as a printer prevented. At length God answered my prayer. Having heard of the Strict Baptist Mission in England, I made my application to its Secretary through Mr. Van Geyzel, and receiving a favourable reply, I commenced my probationary labours on the 1st of February of last year. And now before God and this whole company, I make my solemn avowal by His grace to preach only Christ and him crucified, and to uphold only the doctrines contained in the word of God. My heart's desire is that you will pray for me, that through my mouth God's message may be proclaimed, and ignorant perishing sinners in this country be brought to Jesus as their only Saviour; that He may see in them the travail of his soul, and may be satisfied. Amen."

Mr. James Silva then proceeded to give a solemn charge to the Missionary concluding by handing him a Bible, and while they were both holding it, putting these questions:—

"Dear Brother, will you be faithful unto God to the end?"

Mr. A. answered, "The Lord helping me, I will."

"Will you preach any other Saviour but Jesus to perishing sinners?"

"The Lord helping me, I will preach him as the only Saviour."

"Will you teach any other doctrines than those contained in the Holy Bible?"

"The Lord helping me, I will preach no other."

Whereupon Mr. Silva said, "Dear Brother, accept this Bible to go and preach Christ and him crucified, from this time forth; and he who has said 'Go and preach the gospel to every creature, baptising them,' &c., will be with you to the end according to His promise. Let this Bible ever keep you in remembrance of this night's solemn meeting, and of the vows you have publicly made before God and this congregation. The Lord bless you and keep you, and at last may you obtain the approving sentence from your master and judge:—'Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'"

Mr. Pigott then offered a very earnest ordination prayer, and Mr. Waldock addressed the congregation. After the benediction, the meeting separated, all expressing their feeling that it was a most impressive service.

It ought to be mentioned that two esteemed brethren from Madras, Mr. H. F. Doll and Mr. Wilson, both pastors of Strict Baptist churches, were expected to be present at this meeting, but were to the regret of all, unavoidably prevented from coming.

P.S.—An account of the first Annual Meeting of the Colombo Auxiliary, and also of Mr. Andriesz's first baptismal service will be given next month if possible. G. P.

CHARLESTOWN.

THE annual tea meeting was held in the school-room, on March 29th, at which about 230 friends were present. After tea, the chair was taken by Mr. E. Cossey, and addresses were given by various friends. This school, which is connected with Bethel chapel, Shipley, is not now in so flourishing a condition as could be desired. We gathered from the speeches that a few more godly teachers are greatly required, to take charge of two or three classes. The friends have lately purchased a harmonium, which was opened at the meeting. During the evening, some beautiful pieces were sung by the choir from Shipley.

PICTURE OF MODERN LONDON.

AT the recent meeting of the Christian Instruction Society, the Rev. J. H. Wilson, in an able paper, gave the following statistics respecting our great metropolis:—

"Three hundred thousand human souls

have been added to the population of London since the census of 1861. Within the borders of this metropolis are gathered one-tenth part of the population of Scotland, England, and Ireland. It is five times more populous than New York, four times more populous than St. Petersburg, twice as populous as Constantinople, with two-thirds more people in it than Paris, and one-fourth more than the population of Pekin. Every eight minutes of every day of every year one person dies; and in every five minutes of every day of every year one is born. The extent of its territory is never the same. Measuring within its girdle ninety square miles, every year some green fields are built over, and some new suburb arises with five or six hundred houses, and three or four thousand inhabitants. It is at once the Court, the seat of Government, the centre of fashion, the home of all the charities, and a general rendezvous for most of the criminal and desperate classes of the kingdom. It contains one hundred thousand winter tramps, forty thousand costers, thirty thousand paupers in the unions, more Jews than are to be found in all Palestine, as many Asiatics and other heathen as are to be found in Poonah, with a criminal class of whom 66,000 were committed last year (50,000 males, and 16,000 females), and of which number only 7,000 could read and write. The religious statistics are no less painful. It was assumed by Mr. Horace Mann, in his analysis of the census returns (p. 51), that 58 per cent. of the people were able to attend public worship; but it was ascertained that while there was church and chapel accommodation for 29·7 per cent. in the whole of the metropolitan districts, scarcely 20 per cent. were in attendance on Sunday, March 30th, 1851; that is to say, out of 1,476,385 persons capable of attending public worship, only 295,277 were present, leaving upwards of a million of people in this great heart of the empire in open neglect of the means of grace—a number equal to the entire populations of Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, and Edinburgh. The case, we fear, is not much improved by the statistics of 1861. If we analyse the population, and compare the numbers of different classes for whom we plead, with, say, a town of 10,000 persons, we shall find that the 3,000,000 of people in London contain as many Jews as would fill two towns; as many workers on the Sunday as would fill ten towns; and as many habitual gin-drinkers as would fill fourteen towns. More persons than would fill ten towns are every year taken off the streets in a state of intoxication; two towns might be filled with fallen women; one town with gamblers; two with children trained in crime; three with thieves and receivers of stolen goods; half a town with Italians; two with French; four with Germans; one with Greeks; while there are as many Irish as would fill the City of Dublin; and more Roman Catholics than would fill the City of Rome. Amongst this mass of people what a multitude awaits the labours of the Christian evangelist! How suggestive also of the need of a peculiar adaptation of Christian agency! Besides all these, there are 20,000 public-houses and beershops, with 500,000 people as customers, who frequent them. In London one in every 890 of the population is insane; there is one baker for every 1,206 persons; one butcher for every 1,553; one grocer for every 1,800; and one publican for every 668 of the inhabitants."

BAPTISMS.

EDGESIDE NEW CHURCH, ROSSENDALE.—On Lord's Day, March 4th, 1869, at the above church, six females, by Mr. Henry Haworth assistant preacher. The Rev. Abraham Nichols of Sunnyside, reading Matthew iii. and Acts viii., and invoking the Divine blessing upon the service of the morning; the Rev. J. Stapleton, then delivered an interesting and suitable address on baptism, in the presence of a very large and attentive congregation. In the afternoon, the Rev. Araham Nichols preached from (Psalm cxli. 4): "No man cared for my soul." After which the Lord's supper was attended to, and the six candidates for membership received into the church with much cordiality and good feeling, by Mr. J. Stapleton, pastor of the church, in the presence of a large number of spectators, many of whom appeared deeply affected.

WATERBARN, LANCASHIRE. — On Sunday morning, March 7th, after an excellent sermon from Malachi 3rd chapter part of 14th verse, "and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance," the ordinance of believers' baptism was administered to eleven persons (two males and nine females), by the Rev. J. Harvey, of Bury, for the esteemed pastor the Rev. J. Howe, who through protracted indisposition was not enabled to take part in that delightful service. In the afternoon

our pastor, after an absence of nearly four months met with us at the table of the Lord and gave the right hand of Christian fellowship to those who had just put on Christ by an open profession. Truly it was a good day to our souls, and we were led to say at its close, "we have felt it good to be here." Many more are inquiring the way to Zion.

KILMARNOCK.—Three, on 31st January, and one, 28th February. On the former occasion there was a congregation of over *eight hundred*, on the latter there was *one of over six hundred*. During the last quarter we have had eleven baptisms, and of the baptised, eight are males, and three females. We have had an addition of twelve to our number.

MARRIAGE.

HEAP, ROTHWELL.—On February 17th, at the Inependent chapel, Haslingdon, by the Rev. P. Prout, Mr. Heap, to Miss Alice Rothwell, both of Haslingden.

DEATH.

In the prospect of endless life, through the one great sacrifice once offered for sin—Betty, the only and beloved daughter of Mr. John Ratcliffe, who departed this life on the 15th day of March, at Irwell Terrace, Rawtenstall, in the 36th year of her age, and was interred at the Baptist Chapel, Lumb, in Rossendale, the Rev. W. C. H. Anson officiating on the occasion. This departed sister was a member of the baptised church at Cloughfold, having been baptised at that place during the pastorate of Mr. Anson, now of Cawl Terrace; and was highly and deservedly respected on account of her quiet, inoffensive, and serious deportment. A few days prior to her death, the Rev. A. Nichols, an old friend, under whose ministry the family sat at Sunnyside for several years, paid her a friendly visit, when her resignation under a long affliction, and cheerfulness in the prospect of the future, were sufficiently convincing to her friends, that they need not to sorrow as those who had no hope. "For though the earthly house of her tabernacle were dissolved," she expected to be clothed upon—"that mortality would be swallowed up of life,"—and resting in implicit reliance upon the double imputation, *i.e.*, of our sins to Christ, and of Christ's righteousness to them that believe. "For He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. v. 21).

RECEIVED FOR THE SAXON MISSION.

MR. GEISSLER

	£	s.	d.
Mr. T. Clements, Newark	0	5	0
H. Everest, Rochester	1	0	0
Mr. E. J. Oliver, London	1	0	0
The Church at Bramley	4	14	1½
The Church at Bradford (Westgate)	7	10	0

RECEIVED FOR THE BAPTIST TRACT SOCIETY.

By MR. WHITEHEAD.

	£	s.	d.
Several Friends at Pontypool	0	19	0
Mrs. Risdon, Pershore	0	10	0
Miss Cawkwell, Newark	0	2	6
William Knight, Esq., Kensington	1	1	0
H. Everest, Esq., Rochester	1	0	0
Rev. G. Wright, Beccles	0	10	0
Mr. C. Jeffs, Great Grimsby	0	5	0
Mr. H. Shaw, Huddersfield (two years)	0	10	0
Miss Bumpus, Northampton	0	10	0
Mr. J. Burton, Old Basford	0	5	0
London.			
T. H. Harris, Esq.	1	0	0
Mr. J. Smith	0	10	0
Mr. Le Riche	0	10	0
Mr. Le Riche, Jun.	0	10	0
John King, Esq.	1	0	0
Mr. Dunham	1	1	0
Mrs. White	0	10	0
Mr. Pearson	0	10	0
Miss Ashlin	0	10	0
Cardiff.			
Richard Cory, Esq.	1	0	0
Rev. Nathaniel Thomas	0	10	0
Mr. D. Matthias	0	10	6
Mr. William Jones	0	10	6
Mr. H. J. Kyte	0	10	0
Mr. C. G. McCarthy	0	10	0
Mr. Rees Jones	0	10	0
Mr. G. S. Stowe	0	10	0
Miss Blagdon	0	10	0
Mr. Thomas Trist	0	5	0
Mr. J. T. Barry	0	5	0
Mr. George Sully	0	5	0
Mr. D. Griffiths	0	5	0
Mr. D. Joram	0	5	0
Mr. Thomas White	0	5	0
Mr. Alfred Thomas	0	5	0
Mr. Daniel Thomas	0	5	0
Mr. J. Edwards	0	5	0
Rev. T. E. Williams	0	2	6
Rev. A. Tilly	0	2	6
Nine Friends, 2/6 each	1	2	6
Newport.			
Messrs. Jones Brothers (two years)	1	10	0
Mr. M. Wheeler	0	5	0
Mr. Thomas Williams	0	5	0
Mr. J. A. Williams	0	5	0
Mr. E. Jenkins	0	5	0
Mr. Henry Phillips	0	5	0
Mr. James Horner	0	5	0
Mrs. Samuel Porter	0	5	0
Fourteen Friends	1	14	6
Aberpeasey.			
Messrs. J. H. Conway and Son	0	10	0
Mr. Jacob Wyke	0	10	0
Mr. J. F. Venn	0	5	0